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Clark, Charles P.

The life blood of America

Philadelphia

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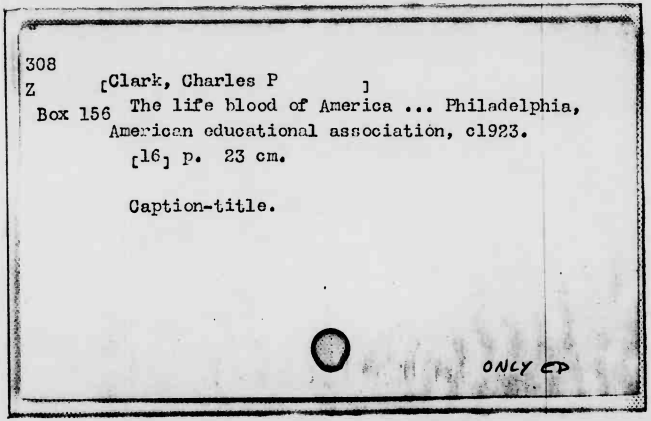

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The Life Blood of America

WHAT makes America great?

What is the vital, living heart of this rich, prosperous, happy country of ours?

What is the Blood of Life that pulses so strongly through the veins of our complex civilization?

Unless we know these things we do not know the source of our prosperity, and we cannot protect and make it permanent.

We all agree that there is no other country in which the national income produced by combined effort is so widely distributed. We know there is no other land where so many of the comforts and joys of life are within everyday reach of everybody.

Even the men who attack our institutions admit this.

We and they may differ in our ideas of what can, and should, be done to improve conditions and make our country even more desirable as a place to live and work and play. But we all desire our country's welfare.

No matter how mistaken we may

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think a man is in the method he would adopt to make things better, we must hesitate to deny him credit for honesty of purpose.

We hear a great deal about "social unrest." In hasty political and social action we see some concrete evidences of it. In many plans offered for government and industry we can easily discern that minds unfamiliar with history and economics would rush us into experiments which have already been made — AND FAILED.

MAN'S AMBITION TO IMPROVE HIMSELF AND HIS CONDITION OF LIFE WAS AT THE BOTTOM OF CIVILIZATION. IT IS ALSO AT THE TOP. It is a universal human instinct that will last as long as our race.

What some of our weak kneed and apprehensive brethren ominously label "social unrest" is about ten per cent. the real spirit of destruction, and about ninety per cent. just plain, ordinary, human discontent.

The remedy for discontent is to make it constructive and useful.

On the other hand, if the discontent is directed by the ten per cent. of destructives, it may do everybody in America incalculable harm.

Every constructive citizen is interested in protecting the Life Blood of America from poison, so that it will continue to carry prosperity and progress throughout our nation.

Therefore it becomes important for us all to know just what is the vital fluid that fills our national veins, and the effect if we permit changes along the experimental lines on which the chief apostles of destruction closely agree.

The United States is just going through an era which closely corresponds to that which England experienced in the years from 1875 to 1900. During that time the governmental activities of England were widely extended.

They began to interfere with and control private life and private enterprise to an undreamed-of degree. Naturally, in the emergencies of the Great War, under extraordinary pressure and preoccupied with vital external problems, this government activity still further pre-empted private life and enterprise, until it reached an intolerable extent.

Even the labor party in England has learned that there are bounds beyond which government activity cannot go without national disaster.

America is learning the same lesson.

The extension of governmental functions in England was not inaugurated by revolutionists of the torch and bomb variety. Nobody set up any theory of a dictatorship by a minority. But a body of speakers and writers used propaganda for many years toward gradual extension of government authority in every line.

The object was, by this non-alarmist method, to carry one thing after another over from private enterprise into the hands of the state, until the number of tasks entrusted to state administration would make it possible to nationalize all industry.

Their ultimate end in this insidious and well managed campaign was to commit every activity to the state, and by so doing abolish opportunity for any man to make use of his own abilities for his own advantage. THEY HOPED TO KILL THE SPIRIT OF INDIVIDUALISM, AND SNUFF OUT FOREVER THE TORCH OF HUMAN AMBITION, BY PUTTING AN END TO PRIVATE ENTERPRISE.

We all know that here in the United States we have been going through an experience almost exactly parallel to that of England.

During the first ten years of this century this movement added to the plain, simple functions of American government all sorts of special bodies, empowered to regulate all sorts of matters which had gotten along very well indeed without any such supervision.

The habit grew and grew, until there were commissions to regulate almost everything conceivable.

With this development came an extension of the functions of the regularly constituted branches of the government itself. Law after law was passed to authorize government intervention in all kinds of activities. And in each case the result, whether so intended or not, had a general tendency in the same direction.

It removed actual control from private hands.

THIS TENDENCY TO CURTAIL PRIVATE RIGHTS AND PRIVATE ENTERPRISE HAD REACHED SUCH A STAGE THAT THINKING AMERICANS WERE BEGINNING TO REACT AGAINST IT, WHEN THE WAR CAME UPON US.

The multitude of national emergencies created by our entry into the war gave unexpected opportunity for extending the scope of government into fields theretofore considered private. Military exigency furnished the excuse.

Every American would sink his personal rights for the nation's cause.

The group of Americans corresponding to the British group which quietly manipulated toward government control of industry in the last quarter of the last century exerted every ounce of influence they possessed to extend state activity in every direction. THEIR PROPAGANDA AGAINST PRIVATE ENTERPRISE COST MILLIONS OF DOLLARS AND REACHED ALMOST EVERY VOTER IN AMERICA.

The little ten per cent. of real apostles of unrest stirred up the ninety per cent. of ordinary human discontent and used every kind of propaganda they could bring to bear to nationalize all our industries.

They did their utmost to force us into a position where we either had to drop out of the war or nationalize our railroads, coal, steel, and shipping industries.

And their efforts found strong support among wellmeaning but badly informed people who did not realize the true purpose, but believed they saw certain idealistic benefits in features of the program.

During and since the war a succession of strikes, disturbances, demonstrations, and every kind and sort of violent effort has sought to disrupt private business and oblige government to step in and take charge of industry.

Many of the men who foment these disturbances make no bones about declaring openly and repeatedly that THEIR PURPOSE IS TO MAKE BOTH EMPLOYER AND PUBLIC SUFFER in the hope to create such trouble and difficulty as to stop any kind of business being carried on by private capital.

Men who have had opportunities of studying these anti-social enterprises in different industries and in different states do not hesitate to express their belief that the irreconcilables among the LEADERS DELIBERATELY PURSUE A POLICY OF MAKING EVEN THE STRIKERS SUFFER AS MUCH AS THEY DARE.

They do not care how they get their end. Any means will serve, regardless of the harm done, or the people hurt, if they can only push the country one inch farther in the direction of government industry.

These things are not hearsay or guesswork. They may not be matters of common knowledge. But they are matters of public record

open to anybody who can read, and will take the trouble to add a few columns of figures.

This American group working for nationalization of industry has exercised its influence so effectively that our government activities have been extended to the alarming point where more than 2,000,000 of our fellow citizens are on the public payrolls, and our grand total annual bill for government has run up to more than Eight Billions of Dollars.

Our first Constitutional principle held the least government to be the best government. But constant influence toward nationalization has expanded our government functions until one worker out of twenty is a public servant, paid out of the taxes You and I and The Other Fellow give up.

Thanks to this extension our bill for government is nearly One Million Dollars an Hour, and we work about one day a week to pay it.

Now, in the light of this PERSISTENT CAMPAIGN TO NATIONALIZE ALL BUSINESS AND PUT PRIVATE ENTERPRISE OUT OF THE RUNNING, let us consider for a moment what is the real basis of our industries, and of all industries in all countries.

What is the Life Blood that keeps industry alive and growing and prosperous? What is the vital fluid which our civilization must have in free supply, or—wither and die?

To understand the situation clearly we go back to the origins of our government, and what do we find?

We find that THE UNITED STATES WAS NOT FOUNDED ON A GROUP OF PEOPLE, BUT ON AN INDIVIDUAL—THE AMERICAN CITIZEN. The Constitution, which was drawn at Independence Hall in Philadelphia, and adopted as the basic law of our country, was erected from the first word to the last on one single, simple principle.

That PRINCIPLE WAS NOTHING MORE THAN AN ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF THE RIGHT OF EVERY INDIVIDUAL TO LIBERTY OF PERSON, LIBERTY OF PROPERTY AND LIBERTY OF CONTRACT.

From this single, simple principle has grown the tremendous industrial civilization of our nation today.

The foundation of all our greatness is the human individual, and his right to work, play, love and worship as he will. All our marvelous economic progress, which is the wonder of the world, has been based on the

individual, and not on government, as the mainspring of activity.

THERE IS NO AMERICAN INDUSTRY THAT HAS BEEN INVENTED, AND DEVELOPED AND BUILT UP BY GOVERNMENT. The origin, and life, and growth and success of every business in this country has been in the minds and hearts of individuals.

OUR NATION'S GREATNESS GROWS FROM PRIVATE ENTERPRISE.

This is Nature's way. Every government, and every group, with the exception of a few under religious influence, that has attempted to develop industry as common property, by political methods has come to grief. Man can not defy Nature.

How can men go wrong on this important matter?

A man is born. He grows, develops, fails and dies, according to natural laws and his own adaptation of himself to those laws. If he obeys Nature he will be stronger, and better and live longer than if he disobeys her.

A business follows natural laws, just the same as a man.

It is born out of some man's creative brain. As long as it fulfills its need, whatever that may be, it prospers and continues. It is governed by Nature's law, exactly like the man.

When, and if, the business reaches a point at which there is no further demand for what it supplies, no matter whether that condition is its fault or the fault of others, the business dies. It is subject to natural laws, and cannot disobey them without paying the penalties.

But government goes right on. There are just as many men as ever willing and able to work, but the business stops.

Let us stop, too. Let us examine this strange theory that government can carry on business better than private persons.

Let us remember that before the business which has just died was started the same government was operating, and just as many men were willing to work. But neither the government nor the men willing to work started the business.

It originated in the mind of some individual. Individual minds organized it, equipped it, manned it, trained the forces, and directed them in operation.

EVERY BUSINESS IN AMERICA IS THE OFFSPRING, THE PRODUCT OF PRIVATE ENTERPRISE.

A China with four hundred million sets of brains and four hundred million pairs of hands never originated an industry like our automobile industry which has grown in less than half a lifetime to employ two million men. China's total wealth is not more than $100 per person.

All the teeming millions of all Asia have not invented and put into operation an oil industry that engages a million men or an electrical industry that finds useful occupation and good pay for two millions.

And yet Asiatic countries have always had governments, and certainly enough workers to do the work of almost a whole world. Why have they accomplished so little as compared with the United States, and what we have done in a scant hundred and fifty years?

Why have the people of America in less than a century and a half been able to produce a civilization in which the humblest citizen enjoys greater blessings than the richest and most powerful potentates of Asia with countless millions of workers?

What is the heart that gives life and energy to American industries, and makes our wonderful economic civilization grow and expand and yield us year by year a greater share of the good things of life?

It lies in the provision of our great American Constitution that undertakes

"to secure the blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our posterity."

When the people of America dedicated their nation to Liberty they pledged themselves to no empty allegiance. They believed Liberty to be the human right of every individual by divine right. They humbly acknowledged Liberty to be a gift of God,—something that not even a government might deny.

They dedicated the United States of America to Liberty as a divine right, and framed our government as a living expression of their firm belief.

These old forefathers fashioned our government to protect

THE RIGHT TO LIBERTY;

THE RIGHT TO LIVE;

THE RIGHT TO WORK.

They founded the United States on the strongest assurance they knew how to provide that forever and ever the humblest child born on our soil should be guaranteed

INDEPENDENCE OF PERSON;

INDEPENDENCE OF PROPERTY;

INDEPENDENCE OF CONTRACT.

Here is the heart that beats within our civilization, the glowing, glorious heart of America.

Our heart of hearts as a nation is this individual Liberty of every American to risk his capital and his time by backing his own faith in his own ability to produce something the rest of us will buy, and then sell it to us for a price that will give him a profit as his reward for enterprise.

It is this Liberty that has made it possible for you and me to earn five times as much as our fathers, ten times as much as our grandfathers, a hundred times as much as our great grandfathers.

Every man in America who draws wages,—and we are all workers, and in one form or another, draw a wage,—is drawing many times more wages than he could earn with his hands. He is the beneficiary of resources that other men accumulated, some of them long before he was born, by making good use of this American Liberty of private enterprise.

THE WEALTH OF OUR NATION, WHICH MULTIPLIES THE ADVANTAGES EVERY AMERICAN ENJOYS, HAS BEEN BUILT UP OUT OF THESE PROFITS OF PRIVATE ENTERPRISE.

We in this day do not enjoy our railroads, and electric lights, our telephones, and bathtubs and steam heat, our phonographs and radio receivers and automobiles, because we are more powerful, or more skillful or better men than our great grandfathers. They were not produced by our government.

We enjoy all these things because the wealth-producing power of the nation has been multiplied incalculably by individual enterprise, creating and operating industries, and activities which have produced thousands and hundreds of thousands of businesses that make paying jobs for millions.

And the impulse, the inspiration that has fired men to create and build and direct these marvelous activities has been always the same, —the promise of reward for their enterprise, — the nature of man exerting itself under the guarantee of our Constitution that every American shall enjoy Liberty of Person, of Property and of Contract

The Constitution is the heart that furnishes life to American civilization by guaranteeing Liberty to every man to work for his own profit, own his own business, and make jobs for others.

THE LIFE BLOOD OF AMERICA IS PRIVATE ENTERPRISE.

Chas P. Clark

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